

MIDWEEK MESSAGE
May 8, 2013

Words to Consider: *"[This] is the grace of Ascension Day: to be taken up into the heaven of our own souls, the point of immediate contact with God. To rest on this quiet peak, in the darkness that surrounds God. To live there through all trials and all business with the 'Tranquil God who makes all things tranquil.'"*

Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas*

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ **NO CHOIR REHEARSAL** the next two weeks. We will resume on **Thursday, May 23.**

- ❖ **SENIOR CHAT, Friday, May 10, 10:00 AM: "Physical Issues of Aging"** will be considered with a physical therapist, **Janis Thomas.** She is an in home therapist working with Kaiser. Jan will give us some information about how diet, exercise, and fluid intake affect urinary incontinence, daily endurance level, and mood. We will all learn something helpful. This program is held in the Fireside Room of Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 East Meadow Drive. For more information, Dona Smith-Powers, Coordinator (650) 494-3093.

- ❖ **MOTHER'S DAY POTLUCK:** Join us at **6:00 PM on Friday May 10** for our Mother's Day Potluck. Bring flowers to decorate the tables. Bring pictures of your mother or people who have mothered you over the years to share with your friends. We will share a meal, share memories, and enjoy a belated scavenger hunt. Bring a friend! All are welcome.



PCBA Spring Conference 2013

The Promises and Perils of Leadership: Strengthening and Sustaining Those Who Lead

Saturday, May 11, 2013

8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church

3534 Lakeshore Avenue, Oakland, CA

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director, American Baptist Churches Ministers Council,
Conference Leader

Workshops –

Fostering Effective Leaders, *Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson*, Executive Director, American Baptist Churches Ministers Council

Leadership from the Pulpit, *Rev. Dr. Allison Tanner*, Minister of Christian Formation, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist

Challenges to Ministerial Leadership, *Rev. Dr. Paul Martin*, President, American Baptist Seminary of the West

Mission Summit – Setting ABC Priorities, *Rev. Donald Ng*, Senior Pastor, First Chinese Baptist, San Francisco, Vice-President, ABC/USA

Practicing Shared Leadership: Consensus as a Shared Leadership Practice, *Rev. Michelle Holmes*, Vice President/CFO, American Baptist Seminary of the West

Resolving Conflict among Church Leaders, *Rev. Dr. Dayle Scott*, Former Pastor, Regional and National Education Leader

Nurturing Leadership, *Rev. Karen Yee*, Associate Pastor, New Life Christian Fellowship; English-speaking Pastor, Iu-Mienh Friendship Baptist Church

Registration: \$ 25 by April 30; \$30 on or after May 1

- ❖ **SUNDAY, May 12, 10 AM** Worship, *“Movin’ on Up”* and Sunday School for children and youth. **11:30 AM, Adult Spiritual Formation: “Sin Boldly,”** the first session of a three week study of Cathleen Falsani’s book of the same title. In this book Falsani explores the meaning and experience of grace through story and song, quotations and photos. “Justice is getting what you deserve. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. And grace is getting what you absolutely don’t deserve.”
- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, May 14** at the home of Thelma Parodi, 543 South El Monte Avenue, Los Altos, at **10:30 AM**. Let Pastor Rick know if you need a ride.
- ❖ **MEN’S BREAKFAST, 8:00 AM, Wednesday, May 15**, at Hobe’s Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. All the men from our Church family are welcome.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS



The **SPECIAL OFFERING FOR MAY** is our annual offering for the **Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America**. We are one of the original congregational partners of BPFNA, generously supporting their important work over the years. The mission of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America is to gather, equip and mobilize Baptists

to build a culture of peace rooted in justice. For further information, see the website at bpfna.org. Please give generously. To date we have given \$80 toward our goal of \$500.



Adult Spiritual Formation
May 12 – 19 – 26: “Sin Boldly”

Cathleen Falsani: Join us on **June 2** as we welcome author and religion journalist Cathleen Falsani. She will be with us in worship and following worship during the Adult Spiritual Formation hour. She is an award-winning religion journalist and the new Faith & Values columnist for the [Orange County Register](#) in Southern California.

She is author of the critically acclaimed [The God Factor: Inside the Spiritual Lives of Public People](#), [Sin Boldly: A Field Guide for Grace](#), [The Dude Abides: The Gospel According to the Coen Brothers](#), [BELIEBER: Fame, Faith and the Heart of Justin Bieber](#), and the forthcoming [Disquiet Time: A Devotional for Ordinary Skeptics](#) (edited with co-author [Jennifer Grant](#) and published by [Jericho Books](#), fall 2014.)



Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America

Summer Conference 2013

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” Hebrews 13:2

July 15-20, 2013 | Gonzaga University | Spokane, WA USA

The word hospitality often brings to mind images of domestic tidiness but the gospel calls us to be radical in our welcome: to welcome the least of these as we would Christ; to seek the outcasts, the marginalized, the disempowered, the overlooked, the other; and to create community together. This year at summer conference you can look forward to exciting speakers and dynamic workshops that explore topics of hospitality, inclusion and justice. We look forward to sharing

spirit-filled worship with hundreds of peacemakers as we look for ways to grow, support, and encourage each other. Participants of all ages will have opportunities for learning and for playing in community. We hope you will join us!

IN THE WORLD

Human trafficking is an elusive crime: Human trafficking within a country is on the rise, making it difficult to discover and prevent, writes IRIN. "For cross border trafficking, people must pass through the hands of several government agencies, but internally trafficked people need not come to the attention of any officials, so in many ways it's a more alarming situation," said Denis Nihill of the International Organization of Migration. IRINNews.org (5/6)

Aid workers navigate changing boundaries in Syria: Humanitarian aid workers are undergoing an ordeal every day in Syria as they try to reach people in need. "The way the country and the map is drawn these days, it's not as simple as to say you're moving from government-held territory into opposition-held territory," says Matthew Hollingworth, head of the World Food Programme's Syrian operation. Reuters (4/30)

Kenya tests solar-powered mosquito traps: Solar-powered mosquito traps are being installed on an island in Lake Victoria in a new effort by Kenya to combat malaria. The solar equipment also can be used to power light fixtures and recharge mobile devices. BusinessGreen (U.K.) (4/26)

Mobile phones help Zambian health workers: The combination of a mobile phone and a bicycle helps health workers in Zambia see more patients and send reports in real time. This is helping the country to achieve its goal of creating malaria-free zones. PBS/The Rundown blog (4/25)

China earthquake may be result of big reservoirs: China's large dams and reservoirs used to supply water for hydro-power could have contributed to the recent earthquake in Sichuan, scientists say. "The large reservoirs built on the fault line can induce earthquakes as the huge amount of water adds huge pressure to the fracture," says engineer Fan Xiao. Quartz (4/22)

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Joys:

- ✚ Birthday joys: Pamela Sullivan (May 15)
- ✚ Mary Martin and Ron Fredlund for the celebration of their 10th wedding anniversary
- ✚ Thelma Parodi for 4 healing days visiting her sister; for her granddaughter, Lindsay, who is receiving her BA from San Jose State and entering a masters program there
- ✚ For Sean Bell who is receiving his BA from USC this month
- ✚ Paul Tuan for the presence of Chuck and Nancy Syverson in worship
- ✚ Carolyn Shepard for a visit from her sister, Beth; for Steven who has a new job and will soon move to an apartment; for his support team
- ✚ For Pastor Jim (Lakeshore Avenue BC) and Karen Hopkins and family on the birth of their first grandchild, Dashiel Phillips

Concerns:

- ✚ For Paul and Sachiko Berry as they travel to Paris for 6 weeks
- ✚ For Pastor Greg Ledbetter, his wife, Jan, and the people of Shellridge Community Church in Walnut Creek as he resigns from a long and meaningful pastorate

- ✚ For the congregation of First Baptist Church, Alameda, searching for a pastor
- ✚ Pastor Rick for his friend, Michael, in treatment for melanoma; for his nephew, Max, who is going through a rough patch
- ✚ For Pastor Tripp and the family and friends of his aunt, Ann Watlington, as they mourn
- ✚ For Oleta Proctor with ongoing health concerns
- ✚ For Patrice and Richard Heath as she continues to receive chemotherapy for cancer
- ✚ For Don and Mary Granholm
- ✚ For the work of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
- ✚ For Dan and Sarah Chetti and their mission work in Lebanon
- ✚ For Dan Buttry and his mission work as a global peace advocate
- ✚ For Ruriko Uda's congregation, Izumi Parktown Church, in Sendai , Japan
- ✚ For Ramesh Kumar and the ministry of Balasore Technical School in India
- ✚ For our sister church in Corinto , Nicaragua
- ✚ For those affected by indiscriminate acts of violence and for the adoption of measures to heal our communities of all the many ways it makes us less safe and less free
- ✚ For the well-being of our church: wisdom and guidance for our leaders and its future
- ✚ For the economies of which we are a part (global, national, state, local)
- ✚ For the care of the earth
- ✚ For the peoples of the world striving for freedom and dignity
- ✚ For peace in a war-torn world, food for the hungry, homes for the homeless, justice for the abused and oppressed, and hope for the future

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2013

Ascension Sunday

"Movin' on Up"

Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 47; **LUKE 24:44-53**; **ACTS 1:1-11**; Ephesians 1:15-23; **REVELATION 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21**. (The focus scripture is in bold.)

"On this special day the gospel reading departs from the sequence of Fourth Gospel texts in order to make the connection between Jesus' Lucan appearance to the disciples (24:44-53) and the narrative that begins the Book of Acts (1:1-11). The two texts together present the drama of Jesus, who departs, mandates the disciples, and promises to return.

The frame of the Acts narrative concerns Jesus' departure and promised return. Acts 1:11 summarizes the drama concerning Jesus' 'going' ('taken up') and Jesus' 'coming again.' This drama makes him the decisive connection between God's habitat in heaven and the church's zone of the earth, for he is—in heaven and on earth—the one with power and authority whom the church worships and serves. This 'geographic' portrayal is an alternative rendering of what became, in the church, 'two natures in one

person.' The authority of Jesus in his majesty moves readily between heavenly and earthly zones, with nothing outside his governance." (Walter Brueggemann, *Blogging toward Sunday, May 14, 2007*, christiancentury.org).

Prayer: *Risen and ascended Christ, you surround us with witnesses and send us the Counselor who opens our minds to understand your teaching. Bless us with such grace that our lives may become a blessing for the world now, and in the age to come. Amen.*

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

We're on the verge of one of those big transitions in the liturgical year. This Sunday (which is also Mothers' Day) marks the end of Eastertide with a celebration of the Ascension. The following Sunday, May 19, we will celebrate Pentecost, the "birthday of the church." Some theologians believe that the Ascension is as important as the Resurrection. Here the Gospel comes full circle as the Christ, who descended from God, returns to God. This is the ultimate homecoming on which all homecomings are patterned. The course of our lives on earth is this journey from God to God. It is driven by the desire to nest our restless hearts in the heart of God. It is the culmination of communion, now face to face with the Creator. Jesus shows us the Way.

We also begin a three week study in Adult Spiritual Formation of Cathleen Falsani's book, *Sin Boldly: A Field Guide for Grace*. Falsani argues that "Grace makes no sense to our human minds. We're hard-wired to seek justice, or our limited idea of what that means, and occasionally dole out mercy. Grace is another story." This is a great opportunity to explore the author's work before she visits us in person on June 2. It is also a great opportunity to invite someone(s) to come along with us on the journey. I'm sure we all know folks who would benefit from an encounter with grace. Looking forward to seeing you Sunday at 10.

May God's new thing flourish within us and among us.

Pastor Rick

